

The Lewis & Clark Expedition: My All-time History Story

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What is past is prologue. For all of us, an understanding of our yesterdays gives us a better appreciation, a sense, a feel, for who and what we might become. As soldiers, we have always been rooted to the past, the tradition, interest, the understanding of our yesteryears, of our soldiers of another time. This goes a long way toward helping us to appreciate the present, so that we can have a better feel of what we might become, as well.

The Bicentennial of the famous expedition to the Northwest, the Corps of Discovery, the Lewis & Clark Expedition, is one of those opportunities for us to appreciate and understand our roots.

Thomas Jefferson is elected president in 1800. This is a revolution in American politics, the beginning of our political parties. Jefferson is a man who is one of the most intriguing, if not the most fascinating, of all Americans. He is captivated with everything. He is a great agriculturist, a fine architect, has the largest personal library in America at the time.

When he becomes president, the western boundary of the United States is the Mississippi River with two-thirds of the citizenry living within 50 miles of the Atlantic Coast. America, in 1800, has a population of about five million. 750,000 of those were African American, living in slavery and about 600,000 were Native Americans.

Jefferson, the writer of the Declaration of Independence, the most remarkable document in all of our nation's history, serves as Virginia's governor, Ambassador to France, Secretary of State, Vice-President, and two terms as President. Other than politics, his greatest interest might well have been the unknown lands, especially great west.

Coming to work for the President of the United States is Meriwether Lewis. Like Jefferson, he is from Albermarle County in Virginia. He is the personal secretary to the president. He saddles his horse, gets his meals, brings over visiting ambassadors and North Carolina farmers and people intrigued with building more ships, people who were fascinated with the idea of canal-building. They would become real confidantes to each other. Jefferson, 31 years older than Meriwether Lewis, already a widower, will go a long way towards bringing this young Army captain up-to-speed about many of his passions, but specially the West. Lewis will soon catch the fever for the president's plan for understanding the West and his exploration ideas.

In 1803, in a secret communication to Congress, the president sought authorization for an expedition, the first official exploration of unknown spaces. An appropriation of \$2500.00 dollars was requested.

In the spring, Meriwether Lewis, now selected as commander, will be sent to Philadelphia for instruction in celestial navigation, medicine, zoology, biology and botany. He will begin to buy supplies to outfit an expedition west. In short order, he understands that it will take considerably more than ten men and a leader to make this expedition. He consults with the president, and then asks his former Army commander William Clark, to share the command of an expedition west. Clark accepts.

On July 4, 1803, it is announced that we have purchased Louisiana for \$15 million dollars, doubling the size of the United States, 820,000 square miles for three cents an acre. In the summer of 1803, Meriwether Lewis oversees construction of a keelboat at Pittsburgh and takes it down the Ohio River. At the same time, William Clark is gathering up additional men who will be needed

for the trip. Lewis buys a Newfoundland dog for \$20.00 dollars to take along. William Clark brings along York, a slave who he has owned since childhood. The forces gather together and spend time in the fall and winter at Camp Dubois on the Wood River. The fort will be constructed on the east bank of the Mississippi River, in present-day Illinois, about 11 miles upstream from St. Louis. More men are recruited and trained to go to the American west.

The training would be very consistent with what is done in basic training to this very day. The men learn discipline, responsibility, to care of each other. They learn marksmanship, drill and command. They develop a sense of the importance of teamwork. The Army values that we appreciate so much, loyalty, duty and respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage will be a primary

These men are not perfect. They are a hodge-podge of America at the time. Twenty-one privates from the Army, three sergeants, a corporal, nine Kentucky and Virginia rifleman, twelve Frenchmen brought along basically because they knew the waterways, the slave, York. These are tough and rugged young men, who are used to living in the wild. These are men who, for all kinds of reasons, have joined the service; sometimes because there wasn't anything else for them, sometimes the sense of adventure, the opportunity to do something different than they had ever done before. Patriotism. An opportunity to get enough pay to buy land. Oh, they were rough. Some of the boys ran off to town and got "drunked up" at one time or another. They got into fights with one another, cussed and fought and argued. Found an illegal whiskey still nearby.

If you disobeyed, you paid a price. You ran a gauntlet, you were whipped, and you were given extra duty. But, over a period of time during that fall and winter of 1803, they begin to come together as a team.

March 10, 1804. The two commanders attend the ceremonies in St. Louis, formally transferring Louisiana Territory from France to the United States. The team is literally ready to go to make the expedition. On May 14, 1804, as William Clark writes, "under a gentle breeze" they take off. Meriwether Lewis is still in St. Louis, buying additional items needed for the long journey.

The 45 men who will be involved hail from every corner of the young nation. George Drouillard, Pierre Cruzatte, Francois Labiche are sons of French-Canadian fathers and Indian mothers. Reuben and Joseph Field are brothers. The youngest is 17 and the oldest is 35. The young men come from New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Virginia.

They will take with them a large keelboat, 55 feet long and 8 feet wide, 22 oars, capable of carrying 10 tons of supplies. They will take two smaller crafts, called pirogues, one with seven oars per side; and the other with eight. They will begin to go up-river, up the mighty Missouri River, sailing and rowing and using settling poles, sometimes wading along the bank to pull the boats with cordelling ropes. Five, 10, 15, a tough 20 miles in a hard day. The outriders go hunting, trying to gather up items that would be needed to keep the craft going, to keep the men supplied.

Going up the Missouri through the State of Missouri will be extremely difficult. The river is two to three times as wide as today; water levels vary, sometimes up to the knees, sometimes to the waist, sometimes to the shoulders. The men are arguing and battling with each other, going against a very difficult current, sandbars, sharp riverbanks caving in, shifting sands,

tree trunks and limbs crashing into the water. But a learning process goes on. They begin to understand something about working together, about the team idea.

Thomas Jefferson will task the leaders to do all kinds of things. His instructions are very explicit - to explore and locate, to meet the tribes, to find a "northwest passage" all the way to the Pacific Ocean, to take a look at the economic possibilities, and learn about the great varieties of plants and animals.

In order to go up this unknown river, the two commanders will have to call on all of the ingenuity they possibly have. Meriwether Lewis will often be out on the shores, looking for new species. William Clark, a better waterman, stays close. Eventually, Clark will spend more time out wandering and Lewis will spend more time with the craft. They write in their journals faithfully every night, as does First Sergeant John Ordway, and sergeants Nathaniel Pryor, Charles Floyd and Patrick Gass. The journal entries give us an idea of the long days, short nights, difficult times, and the good moments.

On July 4th, the Expedition marked its first Fourth of July. They fired the keelboat's cannon, drank extra rations of whiskey and named the creek that they were along Independence Day Creek. It was the first day on the trip where they brought out their dress uniforms. They fired volleys and celebrate America's 28th birthday.

As they head up river, just north of Omaha, Nebraska, they will meet a small delegation of Otoe and Missouri Indians. This will be the first official council between representatives of the United States and the western Indians. The captains establish a routine for subsequent Indian councils. The men again took off their fatigues and put on their dress uniforms and handed out peace medals and 15-star flags and give gifts of beads and metal and cloth. The men would parade and show off their technology - Lewis' air gun, the compasses and magnets and telescopes. The Indians dance and show their prowess with horses and spears, bows and arrows. Everyone sits down to talk. Lewis gives a speech saying to the Indians that there is a new Great Father far to the east, promises future peace and prosperity if the tribes don't make war on whites or other tribes. The commanders soon realize this trip is exploration and diplomacy.

They kill a badger and stuff it. They catch fish galore. Pronghorn antelope fly across the countryside. They kill their first bison near Vermillion, South Dakota. They see marvelous, marvelous new sights, the Loess Hills, Captain Clark's "bald-pated hills."

There are transgressions at one time or another. Two of the men get drunk. They pay a high price. They get lashed. One of the men falls asleep on guard duty and is court-martialed. He could have been shot under the Articles of War, but gets lashes instead. One of the men speaks of mutiny. Another will run. Both will be tossed out of the Army, removed from the permanent travel party at the end of the first travel year and lashed.

August 20th, near what is now Sioux City, Iowa. Young Sgt. Charles Floyd will be the Expedition's first and only casualty, very likely a burst appendix. He will be buried on a hilltop with full military rites. The site is called Floyd's Bluff and the nearby stream, Floyd's River. Three days later, Patrick Gass, one of three nominated by the men, will be selected by the captains to be the new sergeant, to take the place of Floyd.

On August 30th, the Expedition holds friendly council with the Yanktoni Indians. It will go well, but the Indians say they have very little and need muskets. The Yanktoni talk about the tough toll-collectors, the Teton Lakota Sioux, who live further North.

The expedition moves from the humid high-grass prairies onto the drier great plains. Great Plains. Mule deer, antelope, coyotes and wolves are in abundance.

September 7th. All of the men will assist in capturing a prairie dog to ship back to Jefferson. Before the expedition is completed, 178 new plants and 122 animals, are added to the storehouse of Euro-American science.

On September 25th, the Corps meets up with the Teton-Lakota, the much-feared toll collectors of the river. A fight nearly ensues, is diffused by the diplomacy of a chief named Black Buffalo. For three anxious days, the Expedition stays with the tribe. The Indians and explorers are on the edge. The Corps is greatly outnumbered, ever at the ready. Tough, realistic training helps. They are lucky to avoid confrontation.

They continue upriver. By October 24th, the party is near present-day Bismarck, North Dakota. The Corps soon reaches the Earth Lodge people, the Mandan and Hidatsa. About 4500 people reside in five villages, more than are in St. Louis or even Washington, D.C. They begin to build their winter quarters, Fort Mandan.

On November 4th, the captains hire Toussaint Charbonneau, a young French-Canadian fur trapper living among the Hidatsas, as an interpreter. The Hidatsa has captured his young Shoshone wife, Sacajawea, and several years later sold to Charbonneau. They very likely pick up Charbonneau and Sacajawea, because the Shoshone have horses, which are vital for passage over the Rocky Mountains.

December 17th. William Clark notes a temperature reading of 45 degrees below zero. A week later, Christmas Eve and Fort Mandan is considered complete. The Expedition has moved in for the winter. The time with the Mandan and Hidatsa will be fascinating. The Mandan will perform their sacred buffalo-calling ceremony. A few days later, a herd shows up. The Indians and explorers hunt buffalo. Several Expedition members will get frostbite. Meriwether Lewis' rudimentary medical skills are going to be taxed to the extreme. A young Indian boy is brought in and Lewis has to amputate toes. There is no surgical saw or anesthesia.

February 11th. Sacajawea gives birth to a baby boy, young Jean Baptiste. Meriwether Lewis serves as a midwife and speeds the delivery by giving a potion made by crushing the rings of a rattlesnake rattle into powder, mixed with water.

April 7th. The long winter ends. The solid ice of the Missouri breaks. The commanders dispatch the big keelboat and roughly a dozen men back down river, along with Indian items, boxes of scientific specimens, maps, reports, animal skins and skeletons, mineral samples, five live animals, Indian corn. The prairie dog will make it all the way back to the president and so will one of the magpies.

That same day, the permanent party, the military side of the Expedition, will head west, traveling in the two pirogues and six smaller dugout canoes, made from cottonwood trees during the course of the winter.

There are only 33 people now, including Charbonneau, Sacajawea and the baby boy. Lewis writes, "We are now about to penetrate a country at least 2000 miles in width, in which the foot of civilized man has never trodden. I could but esteem this moment in my departure as among the most happy of my life."

They proceed through Western North Dakota and Eastern Montana. This is all new country for western travelers. The herds of buffalo astonish the Corps, often numbering up to 10,000. There is wildlife galore. On April 29th, they pass the mouth of the Yellowstone River. Captain Lewis and another hunter kill an enormous bear, a grizzly. At first, Meriwether Lewis believes that Indian accounts of the bear are grossly exaggerated, but in the days to come he will understand that this bear is nearly impossible to kill. He writes, "The curiosity of our party is pretty well-satisfied with respect to this animal."

They map the new territories they travel through. The captains eventually would give the names of every Expedition member to some of the landmarks. A daily routines sets in. Camp is set up. A perimeter of defense is established. The men taking turns as cooks, cooks' helpers for the three squads. The commanders have their own mess and camp separately. The noncoms run the show. Everyone has daily tasks.

May 29th. William Clark comes to a stream that will later be called the Judith, in honor of a young girl back in Virginia who he hopes one day will marry him. She will.

The very last day of May, they enter into the remarkable White Cliffs of the Missouri. Remarkable sandstone formations look like the ruins of ancient cities. Meriwether Lewis writes, "As we passed on, it seemed as if those scenes of visionary enchantment would never have an end."

On June 2nd, they come to a fork in the river. The north fork is the one favored by the men as the true Missouri. After several days of scouting, the captains are convinced the right choice is the south fork. They ask the men to vote. To a man, it's the north. The commanders say, "We prefer the south" and the men salute and say, "We follow you." There is something special about the leadership of these two commanders. The men follow without hesitation. The commanders are there, always leading from the front. The leaders are special: professional with high personal standards, discipline, and total commitment. There is always this sense of purpose. They develop and coaching and helping their people. That's good leadership.

It is June 13th. The commanders were right. Meriwether Lewis will come across "the grandest sight I ever beheld - the Great Falls of the Missouri." They discover four more waterfalls.

But, the force has run into a brick wall. The men will be forced to portage 18-1/2 miles to get around all of the falls. For nearly a month, they will contend with hot and cold weather, hailstorms, prickly pear, cactus, broken terrain. It will be a very difficult time for them from construction of crude wooden carts, underground caches for cargo to be left behind, hauling and dragging the canoes and the remaining supplies.

July 4th. At the Great Falls. A celebration of their second Independence Day together. They dress up and march and fire a volley. They dance late into the night and finish off the last of the whisky.

They now enter the mountains. No more bison. The country is rougher and steeper. The waterways are narrower. By late July, they reach the Three Forks of the Missouri, named for Albert Gallatin, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Madison River for Secretary of State James Madison and the Jefferson for the President, "in honor of that illustrious personage," the author of our enterprise, Meriwether Lewis writes.

Sacajawea recognizes familiar landmarks and points out the place where the Hidatsa had captured her five years earlier. They chose the Jefferson, the river running to the southwest. It is shallow, swift and difficult for dragging their canoes.

August 8th. Now on the Beaverhead River. Sacajawea recognizes a rocky promontory, the Beaver's head Rock and says they are nearing the river's headwaters and home of her people, the Shoshone.

August 11th. Meriwether Lewis, leading at the time, comes across a single mounted Indian. They try to signal friendly intentions. The Indian rides off.

A day later, the shipment from Fort Mandan finally arrives at the White House. President Jefferson will plant the Indian corn and hang the elk antlers in his foyer and send the surviving animals, the magpie and prairie dog, to a natural science museum, located in Philadelphia's Independence Hall. The president will read Meriwether Lewis' letter, a very confident one.

That same day, Meriwether Lewis ascends the final ridge of the Continental Divide. He writes, "of the most distant fountains of the waters of the mighty Missouri, in search of which we have spent so many toilsome days and restless nights." He will drink from a cold spring. 200 meters higher, Lewis and his three men will be at the present-day border between Montana and Idaho. Lewis expects to see a vast plain to the west with a larger river flowing to the Pacific. The Northwest Passage had been the goal since the time of Columbus. Instead, all that they will see to the west are more mountains.

August 17th. Captain Lewis tries to negotiate for the horses he now knows are all important to cross the daunting mountains. Clark and the rest of the Expedition arrive. Sacajawea comes forward to the council to translate. Remarkably, Cameahwait, the Shoshone chief, is her own brother. The captains call the spot Camp Fortunate. The next day is Lewis' 31st birthday. He becomes very introspective and writes, "I had as yet done but little, very little indeed. In the future, I vow to live for mankind, as I have heretofore lived for myself."

William Clark has gone on ahead and takes a look at the Salmon River. There is no way they can make use of it. It's way too wild. We know it today as the River of No Return.

August 31st. They set out with 29 horses, a mule, and Old Toby, a Shoshone guide. They cross the rugged, mountainous Lost Trail. Rocks and broken trees are everywhere. The passage is most difficult. In a large meadow, they meet the Salish Indians. Six languages, Salish, Shoshone, Hidatsa, French, sign and English, are needed to communicate. They travel through the Bitterroot Valley to the Travelers Rest, repacking and resting for three days, then begin the long crossing of the Bitterroot Mountains. The trip will take 11 days, the party on the brink of starvation and the entire Expedition struggling because of the early snows. They resort to butcher several of their colts to survive. The mountains seem to be endless.

Yet, there are no complaints. The men suck it up and they get the job done. Finally, they emerge onto the Weippe Prairie, meeting the Nez Perce Indians. The Indians welcome the travelers. Soon, every member of the trip is sick after gorging themselves with salmon and a root called 'camas'. One of the sub-chiefs, Twisted Hair, shows them how to use fire to hollow out pine trees and make new canoes and agrees to keep their horses for the return journey.

It is the first week of October. The expedition pushes off into the Clearwater River with five new canoes. For the first time, the river's current is at their back. They head down the Clearwater and the Snake and reach the Columbia. The river is teeming with salmon. Indian villages crowd the Columbia on both sides. The men negotiate for dogs. Most don't want to eat salmon. They buy nearly 400 dogs.

October 18th. William Clark is ahead of the main party. He sees Mount Hood in the distance.

On November 7th, William Clark writes his great journal entry, "Ocean in view. Oh the joy!" Actually, the expedition is at Gray's Bay, 20 miles from the sea, battling furious Pacific storms, high winds, rolling waters. The going is tough for nearly three weeks. Clark writes about "the most disagreeable time I've ever experienced."

November 24th. The commanders ask all members to vote on a winter campsite. The choices: the Washington side of the Columbia River, or the Oregon side, or go back to the Nez Perce villages, or find a freshwater site or look for the best elk hunting is good. All members of the party have a voice. York votes sixty years before slaves in the United States would be emancipated and franchised. Sacajawea votes as well, more than a century before women or Indians have the right to vote or have full rights of citizenship.

The majority wants to cross to the south side of the Columbia, near present-day Astoria, Oregon. A winter quarters is built. Home for 112 days. Twelve days without rain. Only six days with some sunshine.

On Christmas, the captains hand out handkerchiefs and the last of the Expedition's tobacco. After two long years, the men are homesick. They make 338 pairs of moccasins and new leather outfits. The men take turns at the Pacific Coast 15 miles away, distilling ocean saltwaters for the return journey. The hunting is poor. Fleas are everywhere. The local Indians are hard bargainers and not as friendly.

March 7th. The last of the tobacco. Patrick Gass reports that the men use crabtree bark as a substitute.

March 31st. The Expedition sets out for home. They get back to the Nez Perce people and have to wait for the snows to melt in the Bitterroots. After a week, they get their horses and they head out.

July 3rd. After re-crossing the Bitterroot, at the Travelers Rest just south of present-day Missoula, Montana, they split into smaller groups in order to explore more of the Louisiana country. The commanders make tough calls. We need to check out additional areas. Divide the unit or not? How many teams? Can we safely afford to divide the force?

In time, five different teams were assigned for very specific tasks. The unit will be stretched out over a distance of nearly 500 miles east to west, nearly 250 miles north to south. This remarkable unit performs notably. They are teams much like our modern special forces, Delta Force, recon teams. They are the best, highly trained, mobile, flexible, capable.

William Clark will travel through the Yellowstone Country, reentering the Great Plains, on the Yellowstone River. His team needs to build two dugouts lashed together. They will be stopped at one time while a huge buffalo herd crosses the river. Near present-day Billings, Montana, a sandstone outcropping will be named Pompey's Tower, in honor of Sacajawea's young son, Little Pomp, as William Clark liked to call him. Clark will inscribe his name and the date.

Sgt. Pryor will lose the horses that were meant to be taken back to the Mandan as a thank-you gift, likely taken by the Crow Indians, the tribe they met and yet never met. His crew catches up safely. Most of the Clark journey is uneventful.

Heading back toward the Missouri on July 26th and 27th, Meriwether Lewis sees eight Blackfeet warriors. Captain Lewis has three men with him. They camp together. There is a bit of trepidation in the air. On the morning of the 27th, the explorers catch the Blackfeet trying to steal their horses and guns. A quick fight. Two Blackfeet are killed. The only bloody conflict during the entire Expedition. Lewis leaves the peace medal around the neck of one of the Indians, "that others might be informed as to who we are." Lewis and his three team members gallop away, traveling 120 miles in 24 hours. They meet another team with canoes on the Missouri River and paddle off toward the rendezvous with Clark.

August 12th. Downstream from the mouth of the Yellowstone, the entire Expedition is finally reunited. Meriwether Lewis just a few days before was accidentally shot by one of the members of the Expedition, while elk hunting. William Clark will doctor the wound. Ever the cheerleader, he will say to the men, "Great job. You've done it. You carried out all the things that we were expecting. You are a tremendous team."

On August 14th, they arrive back at the Mandan villages. John Colter is given permission to leave the expedition and return to the Yellowstone to trap beaver. The party bids farewell to Sacajawea, Charbonneau and little Jean Baptiste.

By September, they are speeding home with the Missouri's current. Fifty, 60, 70, 80 miles a day. Some days, they barely stop to hunt in order to get home sooner.

On September 20th, the men sight a domestic cow on the shore and raise a cheer at the sign that they are finally returning to the settlements.

September 23rd. The last day of the Corps of Discovery. They reach St. Louis. Two years, four months, 10 days. Given up for dead by many people. They are greeted with great enthusiasm. The trip, \$39,000.00 in cost, the great trip into the unknown, is complete.

In the fall, the captains, national heroes, travel to Washington, D.C. Galas and balls are held in the towns they pass through to the Capitol. Meriwether Lewis is told by a senator, "it's as if he had just returned from

the moon." The men get double-pay and 320 acres of land. The captains get 1600 acres.

The rest of the story? Lewis is named Governor of Louisiana Territory and Clark is made Indian Agent for the West and Brigadier General of the Territory's Militia.

October 11, 1809. Lewis commits suicide at Grinder's Stand, at a traveler's inn south of Nashville. William Clark will live a long life, until 1838, and marry Judith Hancock. He will be appointed Governor of Missouri Territory and will be a long-time Indian agent. The Indians always called St. Louis the "Red-Headed Chief's Town."

In 1812, Sacajawea will die of smallpox. William Clark, in St. Louis, assumes custody of Jean Baptiste and her infant daughter. In 1832, York dies, probably of cholera. He had been in the freighting business in Tennessee and Kentucky. Several members of the Expedition will stay in the military. Several will die very young and some will disappear. George Shannon, the youngest at 17 as they started, loses a leg in an Indian fight a year after the Expedition's completion. He will later become a senator and a Federal judge. Patrick Gass, the oldest member of the Expedition, will volunteer for service in the Civil War. "You are too old, but thank you for your interest". He will live to be 99.

So, why is this expedition of such great interest?

It's important because it's our story. It's important because of the great adventure, of our always going after frontiers, important for all of us in the military, because it really hit to the core of what service is all about. It's the meaning of the military in a nutshell. It is the fact that we are willing to give of self?

The Expedition has numerous dimensions. People coming together and working together, caring about one another. Laughter and fun and enjoyment. Fear. Near disaster. Great difficulties. Going into the unknown spaces.

It's a great lesson for all of us. It's a lesson in leadership. A lesson in the great diversity of what makes America, America. It's the wonderment of how if we have understanding of our past, we really will have a greater sense of who we are right now and what we can become. We very well should be honoring, commemorating, understanding the Expedition to the Northwest. The Corps of Discovery. The Lewis & Clark Expedition. The meetings with the tribes, over 50. How kind and giving the tribes were to them as they traveled along the way. The leadership of the two remarkable young commanders, a team that came together and carried out the mission as their senior commander assigned them.

The Lewis & Clark Expedition, the Corps to the Northwest, is a wonderful opportunity for us, as Americans, to honor, to commemorate our past and to use a model that can make a difference now and tomorrow. Thank you.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1803-1806

Timeline of Events

1801-1802	Meriwether Lewis serves as private secretary and aide-de-camp for President Jefferson; Lewis offered leadership of expedition
<u>1803</u>	
January	Jefferson sends request for \$2,500 for expedition to Congress, Congress approves.
January to June	Lewis studies botany, medicine, astronomy, etc. in Washington, Virginia, and Philadelphia
June 20	Jefferson writes specific instructions to Lewis outlining the "object of your mission" (see handout)
July	Lewis finds out that Napoleon sold Louisiana to the U.S.; Clark accepts Lewis' offer to co-command the "Corps of Discovery"
August	Keelboat leaves Fort Pitt, present-day Pittsburgh
September	At Wheeling, Virginia Lewis picks up ammunition and rifles that had been sent overland from the new armory at Harper's Ferry
October	Lewis meets Clark at Clarksville, Ohio (of all places)
November	Party stops at Fort Massac and Kaskaskia (to choose more personnel)
December	Lewis meets Spanish governor of Upper Louisiana, who refuses permission to let expedition continue until territory transferred
<u>1804</u>	
March	Ceremony finally takes place, transferring Louisiana Territory from Spain to France, then France to the U.S.
May	Clark takes boats and men up Missouri to St. Charles (May 14). Lewis joins party from St. Louis (May 20). Expedition leaves St. Charles (May 21); on May 23, they encounter their first Indian tribe, the Kickapoos
July	Expedition camps near Platte River
August	Sgt. Floyd dies on August 20 near today's Sioux City, Iowa (the only casualty of the trip); on August 25, Pvt. Gass is promoted to Sgt.
September	Tense meeting with the Teton Sioux who controlled river travel.
October	Expedition meets Mandan and Hidatsa tribes
November	Site chosen for winter quarters at Fort Mandan; Touissaint Charbonneau hired as interpreter; his Shoshone wife Sacagawea will accompany him

1805

- February to March Jean-Baptiste Charbonneau born to Sacagawea February 11; Four dugout canoes constructed
- April Expedition leaves Ft Mandan April 7; Corporal Warfington party departs with keelboat for St. Louis; (April 25) Expedition camps on Yellowstone, 2 mi. S. of Missouri River; April 27 party enters present-day Montana.
- May Arrive at Milk River on May 8; on May 20 the expedition reaches the Musselshell River; on May 31 they enter the White Cliffs area
- June Camped at Missouri - Marias Rivers on June 3; after a week, the south fork is chosen- the true Missouri; on June 13 Lewis finds the Great Falls of the Missouri, proving that the captains made the right choice
- June to July Expedition portages the five falls; the 18-mile portage takes one month (June 13 to July 13); the group departs July 15; on July 27 they reach and name the Three Forks of the Missouri; they take the Jefferson, the W. fork
- August On August 10 Lewis reaches forks of Beaverhead River and takes west fork; on August 12 they cross Continental Divide at Lemhi Pass; on August 13 they meet the Shoshones
- August to September They get badly-needed Shoshone horses, meet the Salish at Ross' Hole, and proceed over Bitterroot Mountains; almost starve and freeze in mountains; meet Nez Perce Indians on September 20
- September to October Travelers' Rest Camp, Lolo MT (Sept. 9-11); Canoe Camp, Idaho (Sept. 26-Oct. 7); group begins water trip via Clearwater - Snake - Columbia River; Celilo [Great] Falls, Oregon (Oct. 22); The Dalles (Oct. 25)
- November Group reaches Pacific Ocean (Nov 6). Clark estimates they traveled 4142 mi from the mouth of Missouri; pick site for Ft Clatsop, winter quarters.

1806

- March depart Ft. Clatsop to begin return trip on March 23. 1806
- April Cascades, Oregon/Washington (April 9-12); junction of Columbia and Walla Walla Rivers (April 27-30)
- May to June rejoin the Nez Perce who had been keeping their horses (May 3). Held up at Camp Chopunnish on Clearwater River (May 14-June 10) with the Nez Perce due to weather; depart for mountain crossing on June 10, but cannot find trail due to deep snow; return to Wierpe Prairie to hire 3 guides; set out again (June 24)
- July Camp at Travelers' Rest (June 30-July 3); party splits; Lewis heads northeast, Clark goes south; Lewis meets Blackfeet on Two Medicine River (July 26-27); ensuing fight kills one or two Blackfeet; Clark reaches Pompey's Pillar (July 25)
- August to September Two parties rendezvous at Point Reunion (North Dakota) on August 12; reach present-day Bismarck, ND on August 18; Omaha (Sept. 8); Kansas City (Sept. 15); Corps of Discovery returns to St. Louis September 23